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could scarcely move, and he asked his brother for some water. The latter did as he was told, but the more Suko drank the thirstier he became, and he kept his brother continually on the run to fetch water. Finally Kuru became tired of this and helped his brother to get to the edge of the creek, so that he might drink as much as he wanted.

Arrived at the waterside, Suko lay down on the ground, and reaching with his head down in the water, he kept on drinking without stopping. Gradually his body assumed the shape of a gigantic boa constrictor (M.: *waula;* S. *wayil*), while the head retained its normal size and shape. Kuru became scared and he went home, but did not dare tell anything about what had happened. When the people inquired about his brother, he answered that he was still engaged in fishing and would come a little later.

But the neighbors noticed that something had happened and they made off all together to look for Suko. Arrived at the fishing ground, they found the boa constrictor on the branches of a very high ceiba or silk-cotton tree. But hardly had they perceived him when a big flood came which inundated the whole country. Every one was drowned with the exception of Suko and the latter's wife and children.

CHRISTIANIZATION.—Many women and children who have not been christened carry small crosses, medallions, and scapularies around their neck, which articles they have obtained from passing priests, or bought from Ladino traders. They consider them generally as charms to ward off danger, sickness, poison, and death. By many Indians who have not received any teachings from missionaries baptism is considered often only a sort of magic ceremony to get a new name, drive out the devil, or ward off danger, evil, and the like. Even in the interior, where many Indians pretend to be Catholics, the cult of the saints is often nothing less than a fetish worship. Pictures and statues of the saints take the place of house idols. When the Indians are on the point of committing an act which does not agree with the teachings of the church, the respective images or statuettes are covered up with a cloth, so that the saints are unable to observe them. When they ask the saint for a special favor they make a vow or solemn promise to him and pray during nine consecutive evenings. In case the saint proves unreliable he is sometimes punished by being beaten or beheaded or mutilated in some other way.

During the colonial period Spanish missionaries made several attempts to penetrate among the aborigines of the Mosquito Coast, but their efforts were unsuccessful. An account of the activities of these Franciscan monks is given by Conzemius (b: 25–31). Since the last years of the nineteenth century Spanish Capuchins from Barcelona have been established at Bluefields and in several of the

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787 larger settlements of the country; they ignore the Indian languages, however, and their activities are practically limited to the Ladinos.

On the other hand, the Moravians (*Unitas Fratrum*), who came to the coast in 1849, have succeeded in evangelizing most of the Miskito and some of the Sumu as well. They use both English and Miskito in church and school. The first effort by Protestants to introduce Christianity among these Indians is the one made by English Puritans, who in 1630, under the Earl of Warwick, took possession of the island of Providencia, situated off the Atlantic shore of Nicaragua. They opened up commercial relations with the Miskito of Cabo Gracias a Dios and maintained themselves in the island until 1641, when they were ejected by a Spanish fleet. In those days a number of the Indians traveled to Providencia, where they became familiar with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments (Sloane, a: I, p. LXXVIII).

SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS: OMENS, CHARMS, AMULETS, TALISMANS, ETC.

787 BAD OMENS.—Anything occurring out of the ordinary is considered a bad omen (M.: *yulswin;* S.: *diluk*), and some calamity is believed to befall one or more of the persons present.

Should the hunter, for instance, miss the game an unusual number of times on a certain day, he considers this the sign or token that he will soon fall sick and perhaps even die.

If someone should quite involuntarily let the paddle drop in the water, this is accepted in the light of a token of something evil about to happen.

Should the dog act in a peculiar manner and run around barking all about the house, although investigations will show that there is nothing wrong anywhere, this is a bad omen and soon some one of the inmates will die.

The crowing of a hen is also taken for a bad augury. Ladinos and Creoles participate in this superstition, and they immediately catch the fowl in question and wring its neck.

825 787 BIRDS OF ILL OMEN.—There are a number of birds which cause disease and even death when being seen, either at any time or under certain circumstances only. They should particularly be avoided by the Indian when he is hunting or working in the bush on a Sunday, but this belief is undoubtedly traceable to Christian influence. The Indians refuse to eat the flesh or the eggs of certain melancholy birds, believing that by so doing they will go wailing through the bush like the lonely bird itself. They also refrain from killing certain birds believed to have a keeper or owner invisible to man, and who would revenge himself.